

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2605

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, February 23, 1996

Title: An act relating to importation of *Macrocystis* seaweed.

Brief Description: Allowing importation of *Macrocystis* seaweed for the use in the herring spawn-on-kelp fishery.

Sponsors: House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Linville, Fuhrman, L. Thomas, Thompson, Regala, Basich, Quall, Hatfield, B. Thomas, Stevens, Sheldon and Buck).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources: 2/20/96, 2/23/96 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Drew, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Hargrove, Haugen, Morton, Oke, Owen, Snyder, Strannigan and Swecker.

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

Background: Seaweed is used extensively by fish populations for protection and for spawning. Studies have shown that removal of seaweed, especially kelp, has a detrimental effect on salmon production. *Macrocystis* is a type of seaweed used in the herring spawn on kelp fishery.

Legislation enacted in 1993 limited the entry into the herring spawn on kelp fishery. This legislation limited the total number of license holders to five for this fishery. Specified license holders are eligible to bid for the limited entry licenses on an annual basis. Persons in the herring spawn on kelp fishery typically harvest the tops of the *Macrocystis* plant, place it in a net, and introduce herring into the net. The herring eggs are then harvested from the seaweed, processed, and marketed. Due to the limited availability of *Macrocystis* in this state, the plant is generally imported from Canada for this fishery.

State law prohibits importation of seaweed species of *Macrocystis* after July 1, 1995, for use in the herring spawn on kelp fishery.

Summary of Amended Bill: The generic prohibition against importing *Macrocystis* for use in the herring spawn on kelp fishery is removed. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is authorized to ban the importation of *Macrocystis* in specific areas where the presence of fish or shellfish diseases would make it likely that the disease would be imported along with the *Macrocystis*. The department is required to incorporate this importation policy into its policy

for fish and shellfish disease control. Studies of the seaweed and spawn on kelp fishery are required of the Department of Natural Resources and the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The Department of Natural Resources must examine the need for policy and statutory changes for the marine seaweed program and report to the Legislature by December 1, 1997. The Fish and Wildlife Commission must assess the conservation issues concerning the herring spawn on kelp fishery and report to the Legislature by December 1, 1997.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Herring fishers who participate in the spawn on kelp fishery require the importation of kelp in order to conduct the fishery.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Don Stuart, Salmon for Wash. (pro).